



Daily Verse and Comment

Joshua 9:3-15

(3) But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, (4) they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, (5) old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and* moldy. (6) And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, “We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us.” (7) Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, “Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?” (8) But they said to Joshua, “We *are* your servants.” And Joshua said to them, “Who *are* you, and where do you come from?” (9) So they said to him: “From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, (10) and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* beyond the Jordan—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroht. (11) Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, ‘Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, “We *are* your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us.”’ (12) This bread of ours we took hot *for* our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy. (13) And these wineskins which we filled *were* new, and see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey.” (14) Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD. (15) So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.

New King James Version

Deception is so tricky and commonplace these days that we can lose sight of what it even looks like, so here are some things to consider:

- » If we must disguise ourselves or our intentions, are we doing God's will? [Jesus Christ](#) never operated this way.
- » If we must approach a matter from the side instead of the front gate or front door, are we doing God's will? Jesus calls someone who climbs in some other way a thief and a robber—someone who is out for what he can get, not what [God](#) wants ([John 10:1](#)).
- » If we use or manipulate others to get something done, it indicates that something is rotten.
- » If we do things for appearance's sake instead of reality, we should recognize that what we are doing is not of the holy God. At best, we are doing the will of a carnal person—ourselves. At worst, we are doing the will of someone even more unscrupulous. Jesus has good reason to name [Satan](#) the father of lies and liars ([John 8:44](#)).

Notice what John writes in [Revelation 22:14-15](#):

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and [*whoever loves and practices a lie*](#) .
(Emphasis ours.)

These verses serve as a final bookend and mirror of that fateful day in the Garden of Eden. Satan practiced his lies, and Adam and Eve loved them. They had the truth from God, but Adam knowingly chose to listen to someone else, loving what was false. As a result, God drove humanity from His presence, and they lost the right to the Tree of Life.

Thus, God decries both sides of this worthless coin of deception. On one side, He commands us not to bear false witness, which covers all forms of dishonesty. But on the flipside, He urgently warns us not to allow ourselves

to be deceived, taken in, hoodwinked, or used by others in their schemes, machinations, or manipulations.

Jesus counsels us to "be wise as serpents but harmless as doves" ([Matthew 10:16](#)). We likely lean toward one or the other. Some have the "wise as serpents" part down but lack a dove's gentleness and harmlessness. Others are dovelike, but they turn a blind eye to the fact that evil is real and end up ensnared.

The right balance is to do what Joshua neglected to do about the Gibeonites: earnestly [seek God](#). In this way, we can keep from planting the seeds that will bear bitter fruit for ourselves and others. Deception may work, but in time, it always proves the law of unintended consequences—both for the deceiver and the deceived.

— David C. Grabbe

To learn more, see:

[Joshua and the Gibeonites \(Part Three\)](#)

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[Law of Unintended Consequences](#)

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